

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of controlling document edits comprising:
storing a plurality of alterable electronic documents on a computer system, the plurality of electronic documents being associated with a patent application;
receiving from a user ~~generating~~ a first signal indicating that one or more of the electronic documents are to be filed in a patent office; and
automatically locking the one or more electronic documents ~~document~~ into a non-editable form.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising storing the one or more electronic documents in a package prior to generating the first signal.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising allowing a user to perform ~~performing~~ a manual verification of the locked electronic documents prior to filing the documents in the patent office.
4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising electronically filing ~~transmitting~~ the electronic documents in to ~~to~~ the patent office.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising generating a first lock signal in response to the first signal, and in accordance therewith, automatically locking the one or more electronic documents.
6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the automatically locking includes automatically converting the one or more electronic documents from a first document type to a locked image file.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 further comprising displaying the locked image files in a file history portion of a graphical user interface, wherein the file history portion of the graphical user interface provides a record of documents submitted to a patent office.~~interface.~~

8. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the locked image file is a locked .pdf file.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving ~~generating~~ a second signal indicating that the one or more of the electronic documents are final draft documents.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein each electronic document has a native format type, the method further comprising generating a first lock signal in response to the second signal, and in accordance therewith, automatically locking the one or more electronic documents in their native format types, and generating a second lock signal in response to the first signal, and in accordance therewith, automatically converting the one or more electronic documents from their native format types to locked image files.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic documents include a provisional patent application specification, non-provisional patent application specification, response to an office action, inventor declaration, assignment, power of attorney, or patent drawings.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of controlling document edits comprising:

storing a plurality of alterable electronic documents on a computer system, the plurality of electronic documents being associated with a patent application;

creating a package including one or more of the electronic documents, the package being displayed in a first folder of a graphical user interface; and

automatically locking down the one or more electronic documents in the package when a user transmits a first signal indicating that the package has been transferred from a first phase to a second phase, wherein locking down the one or more documents prevents further editing of the one or more documents. ~~phase.~~

13. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the first phase is a final draft phase and the second phase is a ready to file phase.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the first phase is a final draft phase and the second phase is a filed phase.

15. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the first phase is a filed phase and the second phase is a transmitted phase.

16. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein automatically locking includes automatically converting the one or more electronic documents from a first document type to a locked image file.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 further comprising displaying the locked image files in a file history portion of a graphical user interface, wherein the file history portion of the graphical user interface provides a record of documents submitted to a patent office. ~~interface.~~

18. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the each electronic document has a native format type, the method further comprising generating a first lock signal in response to the first signal, and in accordance therewith, automatically locking the one or more electronic documents in their native format types, and generating a second lock signal in response to a second signal indicating the package has been transferred from the second phase to a third phase, and in accordance therewith, automatically converting the one or more electronic documents from their native format types to locked image files.

19. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the electronic documents include a provisional patent application specification, non-provisional patent application specification, response to an office action, inventor declaration, assignment, power of attorney, or patent drawings.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of controlling document edits comprising:

storing a plurality of electronic documents on a computer system, each electronic document having a native format type;

creating a package including one or more of the electronic documents;

receiving from a user ~~generating~~ a first signal indicating that package is ready to be filed in a patent office;

automatically transforming the one or more electronic documents from its native format types into a format type that is viewable as it will be printed; and

displaying the transformed one or more electronic documents to a remote user.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20 further comprising locking the transformed one or more documents.

22. (Original) The method of claim 20 further comprising generating a signal indicating that the package can be filed.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22 further comprising entering the package into an outgoing mail queue.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23 further comprising electronically filing the package in a patent office.

25. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a second signal indicating that the one or more electronic documents needs to be edited; and

automatically unlocking the one or more documents into an editable form.

26. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein electronically filing the electronic documents in the patent office comprises transmitting the electronic documents to the patent office via an interface to an electronic filing system of the patent office.

27. (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising electronically filing the one or more electronic documents in a patent office.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein electronically filing the one or more electronic documents to the patent office comprises transmitting the electronic documents to the patent office via an interface to an electronic filing system of the patent office.

29. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the first signal comprises a user moving a document from a first section of a graphical interface to a second section of a graphical interface.

30. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the first signal comprises the user moving a document from a first section of a graphical interface to a second section of a graphical interface.

31. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein electronically filing the package in a patent offices comprises transmitting the electronic documents to the patent office via an interface to an electronic filing system of the patent office.

32. (New) A computer system for controlling document edits, the computer system comprising a processor and a computer readable medium comprising instructions executable by the processor to:

store a plurality of alterable electronic documents, the plurality of electronic documents being associated with a patent application;

receive a first signal indicating that one or more of the electronic documents are to be filed in a patent office; and

automatically lock into a non-editable form the one or more electronic documents to be filed in a patent office.

33. (New) The computer system of claim 32, wherein at least one of the plurality of documents is stored on a second computer system, and wherein the computer readable medium comprises further instructions executable by the processor to:

load the at least one of the plurality of documents from the second computer system onto the computer system prior to locking the one or more of the electronic documents.

34. (New) A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium, the computer program comprising instructions executable by a computer to:

store a plurality of alterable electronic documents on a computer system, the plurality of electronic documents being associated with a patent application;

receive a first signal indicating that one or more of the electronic documents are to be filed in a patent office; and

automatically lock the one or more electronic document into a non-editable form.

35. (New) A method of electronically filing a document in a patent office, the method comprising:

storing a document on a computer system, wherein the document is associated with a patent application;

allowing a user to edit the document;

receiving a signal from a user that the document is ready to be filed;

in response to the signal, automatically locking the document to prevent further edits to the document;

converting the document from a first document type to a second document type;

electronically filing the document with a patent office via an interface to an electronic filing system of the patent office.

36. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the document is selected from the group consisting of a provisional patent application specification, a non-provisional patent application specification, a response to an office action, an inventor declaration, an assignment, a power of attorney, and a patent drawing.

37. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the document is a plurality of documents associated with a patent application, the method further comprising:
grouping the plurality of documents into a package to be filed electronically;
wherein electronically filing the patent document comprises electronically filing the package.